



SEIUHealthcare.
United for Quality Care

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Before the Appropriations Committee

Good Afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and Members of the Committee, my name is Gloria Duquette. I have been a CNA for 15 years. I am currently working at multiple facilities because I need to work 40-80 hours a week to survive. One hour of my pay is the cost of chicken in the grocery store in this State.

Both the residents and the staff at these nursing home facilities are traumatized from what this pandemic has caused. There is no staff! We work hard and even harder now that we are taking on double/triple the workload. The residents are sicker and younger: on tube feeds, Dialysis, and heart monitors. For many residents, we are the only interaction that they have with another human being. No family, no visitors, just us - their direct caregivers. They are happy to see us when we come to work and sad when we are off. It is so heartbreaking that these residents have to wait so long to be attended to. It is not our fault or on purpose, there are just too many residents who want care at the same time. Someone gets to be first and someone has to be last.

One of my favorite residents was a Teacher in this State. A respectable educated woman who has no one but me. I walked into her room and she was crying because she had to go to the bathroom and it took 25 minutes for me to get to her. All I could do was apologize, repeatedly say that I am sorry, and give her a hug. She was not mad at me because she understood that I was the only staff member on the floor. There was no one else, that is why she was crying.

The State needs to do better. Black and Brown Communities have been suffering our entire lives. We cannot afford basic human needs, such as shelter. We are backed up on our rent & on our mortgages. We cannot afford food at the grocery store to feed ourselves and our children. There are a lot of single mothers in this industry who cannot afford childcare services. Most of these women are immigrants, who do not have family around to help. We have to pick up so many shifts that our bodies are tired, causing our immune system to weaken. We cannot afford healthcare or to even see a Doctor when we are sick. We also need the State to invest in Mental Health services, such as counseling. We are broken physically, mentally, and emotionally.

We live in the richest State in the country, but no one can afford to take care of us? We are being abandoned like we do not matter. Please do the right thing and help us survive.

Thank you for your time.